

a light source that is capable of selectively emitting a beam of visible light;
an optical system capable of directing said beam of visible light to predetermined points on the patient;
a control unit operably connected to cause the optical system to direct the beam of visible light in a manner so as to create a visual indicator on the patient, wherein the visual indicator appears as a stationary image; and
an x-ray source capable of emitting an x-ray signal to a target region on the patient, wherein the x-ray signal is shaped so as to be limited to the area defined by the stationary image.

17. (new) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the visible light is comprised of a laser light signal.

18. (new) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the optical system is comprised of a first mirror and a second mirror that are each operably connected to the control unit so as to direct the beam of visible light in a manner and thereby create the visual indicator on the patient.

19. (new) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the visual indicator is comprised of a illuminated line that appears to be visually disposed substantially about the periphery of the target region that is to be treated with the x-ray signal.

20. (new) An x-ray treatment method comprising the steps of:

determining a target region on a patient for treatment by a therapeutic x-ray signal;

projecting a beam of visible light onto the patient so as to provide a visual indicator that designates the location of the target region on the patient's body;

generating the therapeutic x-ray signal; and

shaping the therapeutic x-ray signal in accordance with the position and shape of the visual indicator on the patient's body so that only the target region is exposed to the therapeutic x-ray signal.

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21. (new) The method of claim ⁵~~20~~, wherein the visual indicator appears as a substantially stationary image.

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22. (new) The method of claim ⁵~~20~~, wherein the visual indicator appears as a substantially stationary image of a line disposed about the periphery of the target region on the patient.

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23. (new) The method of claim ⁵~~20~~, wherein the shaping step comprises the step of providing a collimator between a source of the therapeutic x-ray signal and the patient, wherein the collimator is physically arranged to limit the x-ray signal to the target region.

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24. (new) The method of claim ⁵~~20~~, wherein the target region is determined by irradiating at least a portion of the patient with a diagnostic x-ray signal.